

There has been much debate in our nation's capital as to the most effective way to grow our economy in these difficult times. However, lawmakers from both parties agree that without a modern transportation infrastructure, we cannot compete in a 21st century global economy.

SEPTA has taken the lead in the Philadelphia region and in the nation by making effective investments to modernize its own infrastructure and by providing a more complete and enhanced customer service experience.

I have seen firsthand the result of these efforts with the opening of improved stations in Langhorne and Croydon, two Bucks County communities served by SEPTA's regional rail system. These upgrades have a real impact on the day-to-day lives of thousands of commuters and are an asset to our region. The hard work and dedication of the men and women and SEPTA are evident not just in increasing ridership, but also in their recognition by the APTA as our nation's leading public transportation system. Congratulations once again to everyone at SEPTA. I am confident that you will continue to lead the nation in 2013.

IN HONOR OF THE LIFE OF
FORMER PEORIA MAYOR JIM
MALOOF

HON. AARON SCHOCK

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 25, 2013

Mr. SCHOCK. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the memory of former mayor of Peoria, Illinois, Jim Maloof, who passed away at the age of 93 on January 19, 2013. There is no doubt that Peoria will sorely miss its greatest champion, but his legacy lives on in the city he rebuilt and in the hearts of all who were touched by his generosity. It is difficult to capture a life that was as impactful as Jim Maloof's, but many noteworthy tributes have been written. I want to share just some of the high points in the life of this extraordinary man.

Born in the back of his parents' Peoria grocery store in 1919, Jim would live his life as a true son of the city. Even as a child, his warm spirit and merry character drew people to him, and his legendary penchant for singing began in childhood. As he grew up, Jim became a successful businessman in Peoria, operating a dry cleaner and then a real estate firm that continues to thrive today.

One of Jim's most enduring and powerful legacies is his contributions to St. Jude's Children's Hospital. In 1971, he met Danny Thomas, the founder of St. Jude, and agreed to help raise funds for an expansion of the hospital. Jim proved to be a prolific fundraiser, and one of my favorite stories about him from this time was his use of song and dance routines in his pitches. Just one year later, in 1972, he became the national Executive Vice-President of St. Jude's and opened the first affiliated clinic in the country right in Peoria, Illinois.

The impact of Jim's work with St. Jude is difficult to overstate. St. Jude has given thousands of children a chance at long and healthy lives after receiving a diagnosis that was once considered a death sentence. The research done by St. Jude has advanced

treatments and cures for dozens of diseases. But beyond the material, as in all things, Jim's most important contribution to the children and families of St. Jude was hope. Jim's passion for healing manifested itself in a different way in 1984 when he decided to run for mayor of Peoria. At that time, Peoria was experiencing a period of economic downturn, with thousands of layoffs, a diminishing population, and a dying downtown area. "Would the last one to leave Peoria turn out the lights?" was a common saying in the area at the time.

As with all great figures in history, from Abraham Lincoln to Martin Luther King, Jim Maloof was uniquely suited to his time. When most people looked around Peoria in 1985, they saw a dying city and little reason for hope. Jim Maloof looked around the same city—his city—and saw something worth saving. His vision looked past the boarded up downtown and the vacant houses to the people who, with just a little inspiration, could turn it all around.

And that is exactly what happened. After being elected, Mayor Maloof threw open the doors of government to the citizens and businesses of Peoria and gave everyone a role in revitalizing their hometown. Committees of volunteers developed and implemented projects to revamp the downtown area, including the addition of the Peoria Civic Center, draw new businesses to Peoria, and grow existing ones. Jim's faith in the city was boundless and infectious. Another of my favorite stories about Jim is the mugs he had made listing the great cities of the world: New York, Paris, London, and Peoria, and he affectionately referred to Peoria as the "Little Apple". In 1989, only four years after Mayor Maloof took office, Peoria was named an All-American City.

But the real gift that Jim gave to Peoria was pride. He was an unabashed champion for the city, using his gift for song and his limitless energy to revive the spirits of a dejected town. After serving three terms as mayor, Jim reentered the private sector, but his presence as a Peoria landmark remained undiminished as he hosted telethons for St. Jude, Christmas carol singing every year in the downtown he rebuilt, and participated in community events.

Jim Maloof played in Peoria. He inspired us and challenged us to do more and reach higher, and to do everything with a cheerful heart and a song. His music will live on in the lives of the children saved by his work with St. Jude and in the city he loved.

RECOGNIZING PAUL PLATTNER'S
CAREER OF CREATING WORK OP-
PORTUNITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES

HON. GERALD E. CONNOLLY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 25, 2013

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Paul Plattner on the occasion of his retirement after 39 years of service to NISH and the AbilityOne Program, through which he has helped identify and create work opportunities for the blind and for people with disabilities here and in communities across America.

Mr. Plattner began his career at NISH in 1974, working as a part-time bookkeeper two

and a half days a month. It wasn't long before he advanced from that humble beginning to take on a number of other roles and duties, currently serving as Vice President for Operations. He has worked directly with, and earned the respect of, staff in every major federal agency. He also has developed close working relationships with community rehabilitation programs across the Nation.

Under the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, the AbilityOne Program harnesses the purchasing power of the Federal Government to buy products and services from community-based nonprofits that train and employ individuals who are blind or have significant disabilities. Whether it is performing custodial services, packing medical kits for our troops, working in food service or one of many other duties, AbilityOne workers are making a positive difference in our community. I and many of my colleagues here in the House, both Democrat and Republican, are AbilityOne Champions, and we know firsthand the positive effect this program has not only for the individuals and their families, but also for us as well.

Mr. Plattner has dedicated his life's work to helping provide residents with disabilities in every community with the opportunity to learn new skills, to succeed in a workplace environment, and to gain greater independence and quality of life. Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in thanking Mr. Plattner for his heartfelt commitment to improving the lives of those with disabilities and in wishing him well in his retirement.

HONORING THE 125TH ANNIVER-
SARY OF SAINT PATRICK PAR-
ISH

HON. RODNEY P. FRELINGHUYSEN

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, January 25, 2013

Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Saint Patrick Parish in Chatham, New Jersey, which is celebrating its 125th Anniversary in January of 2013.

The Township of Chatham gained a local, stable Irish population in response to the terrible potato famine in Ireland, in the 1840s. These Catholic families picked up and settled in Chatham, regularly attending mass in a local Madison Parish. However, these immigrants decided they needed a local parochial school for their children since all other options were deemed to be too far. The St. Patrick Catholic School was incorporated in 1875, followed by the completion of a new building for parishioners in 1887, marking the birth of the St. Patrick Parish. After renovations due to fires in the early 20th century, the Parish built a new church in 1955. As the church continued to grow, it decided to establish a new Parish Center in 1989 which would house a rectory, convent and youth ministry in addition to providing resources for program expansion. This center, in 2009, was named after the late, beloved Father Hinds.

The demographics of the once predominantly Irish church have grown significantly to include members of many different heritages such as Italian, Polish, Asian, and Hispanic that reside in Chatham. The parishioners have also begun several ministry programs such as Environmental Stewardship, Christmas in a